

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MANAGU 00248 201512Z

ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00
CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00
PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 AID-05 PC-01 A-01 OPR-02
SY-05 SIL-01 LAB-04 MCT-01 OC-06 CCO-00 COME-00
TRSE-00 EB-08 /084 W

-----081046 201517Z /43

O R 201343Z JAN 78

FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5423

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY MEXICO

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANAGUA 0248

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PFOR, OVIP (TODMAN) NU

SUBJECT: SIT REP NO. 1 - NICARAGUA - TODMAN VISIT

BEGIN SUMMARY. THIS IS THE FIRST OF A SERIES OF SITUATION REPORTS
WHICH EMBASSY IN MANAGUA WILL BE TRANSMITTING RELATED TO PENDING
VISIT OF ASSISTANT SECRETARY TODMAN. END SUMMARY.

1. SITUATION TODAY (JANUARY 19 AFTERNOON) CONTINUES FLUID WITH WIDE
SPECTRUM OF RUMORS CIRCULATING RELATED TO FUTURE OR POSSIBLE FUTURE
EVENTS. SINCE TODAY IS NINTH DAY FOLLOWING ASSASSINATION THERE WILL
BE A MEMORIAL MASS TONIGHT IN OPEN THREE, POVERTY-STRICKEN BARRIO
ABOUT SIX OR SEVEN MILES OUTSIDE MANAGUA. ON SATURDAY AFTERNOON,
JANUARY 21, IN ORDER TO ATTRACT MORE PEOPLE THAN WOULD BE POSSIBLE
TODAY, THERE WILL BE PROCESSION FROM THE LAS PALMAS CHURCH TO MANAGUA
CEMETERY, DUPLICATING THE FUNERAL PROCESSION OF LAST WEEK. TO-
NIGHT'S MASS PROBABLY WILL NOT RESULT IN ANY VIOLENCE OUTSIDE OF
OPEN THREE AND SINCE ALL RESIDENTS OF THAT BARRIO ARE URBAN POOR IT
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PAGE 02 MANAGU 00248 201512Z

WOULD SEEM THAT MINIMAL, IF ANY, VIOLENCE WILL OCCUR AT ALL TONIGHT.
SATURDAY'S PROCESSION IS ANOTHER MATTER BUT IT IS TOO EARLY TO MAKE
AN INTELLIGENT ESTIMATE AT THIS TIME.

2. THE FEEBLE ATTEMPTS AT PROVOKING A GENERAL STRIKE THE PAST FEW
DAYS HAVE PRODUCED LITTLE RESULTS AND VIRTUALLY ALL WORKERS ARE BACK
ON THE JOB TODAY. IT IS GENERALLY CONCEDED THAT THE LABOR MOVEMENT

IS SO WEAK AND SO DIVIDED THAT A STRIKE BY LABOR AS SUCH COULD NOT BE SUCCESSFUL. THERE WOULD HAVE TO BE CONCERTED EFFORTS AT A MASSIVE LOCKOUT BY BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY, AND AT THIS TIME THERE IS NO SUCH INCLINATION.

3. THERE WERE REPORTS OF THE ORGANIZATION OF A LARGE AIRPORT DEMONSTRATION FOR ASST. SECY TODMAN'S ARRIVAL TO DEMONSTRATE REPUDIATION OF SOMOZA REGIME, BUT LEADERS OF UDEL (WHO WOULD BE THE LOGICAL ORGANIZERS OF SUCH A DEMONSTRATION) DENY ANY SUCH ACTIVITY ON THEIR PART.

4. BUSINESS CIRCLES ARE UNEASY OVER SITUATION AND HAVE CALLED, IN VERY STRONGLY WORDED DECLARATION, FOR THOROUGH INVESTIGATION BY GON OF CHAMORRO'S MURDER. PADRE JUAN ARRIEN, SPANISH JESUIT RECTOR OF UNIVERSIDAD CENTROAMERICANA (UCA) AND LONG-TIME RESIDENT OF NICARAGUA AND EX-US AMBASSADOR KENNEDY CROCKETT, ALSO A LONG-TIME RESIDENT, HAVE BOTH TOLD EMBASSY TODAY THAT THEY HAVE NEVER SEEN NICARAGUANS SO UNEASY OVER THE POLITICAL SITUATION AS THEY HAVE OBSERVED THE PAST FEW DAYS. OTHER CONTACTS IN LOCAL BUSINESS COMMUNITY HERE HAVE VOICED SERIOUS MISGIVINGS ABOUT SITUATION HERE SAYING THAT IN THE PAST TEN YEARS OR SO THEY HAVE NEVER FELT SO CONCERNED ABOUT THEIR COUNTRY'S IMMEDIATE FUTURE.

5. ONE RADIO STATION REPORTED ON AIR THIS MORNING THAT PEDRO RAMOS, AMERICAN DOCTOR OF CUBAN BACKGROUND IMPLICATED IN CHAMORRO MURDER, HAD RETURNED TO MANAGUA AND WAS IN AMERICAN EMBASY. WE IMMEDIATELY CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 MANAGU 00248 201512Z

ADVISED THAT STATION AND SEVERAL CALLERS THAT SUCH INFORMATION WAS TOTALLY FALSE AND IRRESPONSIBLE. THAT STORY, HOWEVER, GIVES AN IDEA OF TYPE OF RUMORS FLOATING AROUND TOWN.

6. CONSERVATIVE PARTY (PCN) NATIONAL DIRECTORATE MET LAST NIGHT AND VOTED TO REQUEST POSTPONEMENT OF FEBRUARY 5 MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS. (UDEL LEADERSHIP HAD BEEN ENCOURAGING CONSERVATIVES NOT TO PARTICIPATE IN FEB 5 ELECTION.) THEY WILL BE ASKING NATIONAL ELECTORAL TRIBUNAL IN NEXT DAY OR SO FOR PERHAPS A SIXTY-NINETY DAY DELAY. THEY HAVE NOT INDICATED WHAT ACTION THEY WILL TAKE IF REQUEST FOR A DELAY IS REFUSED. CONSERVATIVE PARTY VICE PRESIDENT ALVARO CHAMORRO STATES THE PCN WILL NOT PARTICIPATE IN THE FEBRUARY ELECTIONS WHATEVER THE RESPONSE. THERE IS NO POLITICAL GROUP WITH LEGAL STATUS OTHER THAN PCN WHICH COULD PARTICIPATE IN ELECTIONS.

7. EMBASSY RECEIVED REPORT FROM VERY RELIABLE SOURCE THIS MORNING THAT SILVIO PENA, CONFESSED LEADER OF THE FOUR MEN INVOLVED IN THE ACTUAL SHOOTING OF CHAMORRO, WILL MAKE PUBLIC DECLARATION LATER TODAY INVOLVING CORNELIO HUECK, DISGRACED PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS, AND FAUSTO ZELAYA, DEPOSED HEAD OF HOUSING BANK (BAVINIC), ALONG WITH PEDRO RAMOS IN PLANNING AND PAYING FOR MURDER. SUCH A REVELATION COULD HAVE SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES FOR SOMOZA GOVERNMENT,

ESPECIALLY IN VIEW OF RUMORS, (WHICH AT THIS TIME ARE NOTHING BUT RUMORS) INDICATING THAT PRESIDENT'S SON TACHITO, MAY BE IMPLICATED WITH HUECK, ZELAYA, RAMOS AND PERHAPS OTHERS IN SOME OF THE ASSASSINATION PLANNING SESSIONS.

8. EVENING OF JANUARY 18 FONMIN QUINTANA TOLD AMBASSADOR THAT IF IT BECOMES EVIDENT THAT UDEL AND OTHERS PLAN TO HOLD DEMONSTRATIONS FAVORING U.S. HUMAN RIGHTS POLICIES DURING TODMAN VIST, THE GON WILL CONSIDER HOLDING COUNTER DEMONSTRATIONS. QUINTANA DOES NOT FAVOR HOLDING SUCH COUNTER DEMONSTRATIONS AND ADDS THAT IT MAY BE NECESSARY FOR THE GON TO PROVIDE VERY HEAVY SECURITY UMBRELLA DURING TODMAN VISIT. WE ARE NOT SURE AT THIS TIME WHETHER VISIT WOULD BE PRODUCTIVE UNDER SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES.
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PAGE 04 MANAGU 00248 201512Z

9. WE WILL BE KEEPING DEPT INFORMED AS FREQUENTLY AS NECESSARY OF CONTINUOUSLY RAPID FLOW OF EVENTS AND WILL ADVISE POSTS WHERE AMBASSADOR TODMAN WILL BE VISITING. WE WILL BE PREPARED, OF COURSE, TO RECOMMEND CANCELLATION OF TODMAN VISIT HERE IF WE JUDGE SECURITY SITUATION WARRNATS. AT THIS DRAFTING, HOWEVER, WE ARE NOT INCLINED TO MAKE SUCH A RECOMMENDATION.
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